

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

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AF/ P: GAFRIEDMAN

IO/ P: FBLACHLY

NEA/ EGY: MSTERNER

EJR/ P- ESAVAGE

H: KFOLGER (INFO)

NEA/ ARN- DKORN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE

USINT CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USINT ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

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KUWAIT ALSO POUCH SANAA

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING IS PARTIAL
EXCERPT FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN' S PRESS BRIEFING
APRIL 13, 1973:

QUOTE: Q. HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY SATISFACTION FROM ANY OF
THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS IN TERMS OF GETTING THE AMERICAN POINT
OF VIEW INTO THE OFFICIAL RADIO STATIONS?

A. IT MAY BE A LITTLE BIT EARLY TO GIVE YOU A THOUGHTFUL
ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION. WE CONTINUE TO NOTE THE APPEAR-
ANCE OF THESE ALLEGATIONS IN A VARIETY OF MEDIA IN THE AREA,
AND WE CONTINUE TO REGRET THAT FACT.

I DON' T KNOW HOW OUR DENIALS COULD HAVE BEEN MORE CATEGORI-
CAL; AND WE HAVE THESE ABSOLUTELY LUDICROUS CHARGES BY
YOUSSEF ARAFAT THIS MORNING WITH RESPECT TO AMBASSADOR
MEYER, WHICH I HAVE TO CALL " LUDICROUS." YOU STACK THES
FALSEHOODS ON TOP OF EACH OTHER AND YOU GET QUITE A TISSUE
OF LIES.

TO TURN IT AROUND, IT SEEMS IRRESPONSIBLE OF MR. ARAFAT --
WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER -- TO MAKE CHARGES LIKE THIS, AND
UNSEEMLY IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, GIVEN THE INCREASINGLY
APPARENT INTERCONNECTION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PALES-
TINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION, ON THE ONE HAND, AND BLACK
SEPTEMBER, ON THE OTHER.

THIS IRRESPONSIBLE KIND OF BEHAVIOR BY MEN LIKE ARAFAT AND
THE EXTREMIST TACTICS OF A SMALL GROUP OF CONSPIRATORS
RISKS DOING SOME DAMAGE, OVER THE LONGER TERM, TO THE
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LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS -- MOST OF WHOM,
BY OUR JUDGMENT OF THE MATTER, SEEM MUCH MORE INTERESTED
IN PROGRESS TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT OF THE MAIN POLITICAL
PROBLEMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

TO PUT IT DIFFERENTLY, WE CAN DERIVE SOME SATISFACTION
FROM THE FACT THAT THE VOICES OF MODERATION AMONG THE
PALESTINIANS STILL CLEARLY HAVE THE UPPER HAND -- ALTHOJGH
THE TACTICS OF A FEW HAVE CAPTURED THE HEADLINES IN RECENT

MONTHS.

NOW, I OUGHT TO ADD TO THAT, I SUPPOSE, THAT, FOR ITS PART, THE UNITED STATES HAS ALWAYS RECOGNIZED THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIANS AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO TAKE THOSE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS INTO ACCOUNT IN ANY SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. ACCORDING TO ONE STORY I SAY, THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT ONE EVIDENCE OF U. S. COMPLICITY IS THAT THE ISRAELI COMMANDOES -- OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL THEM -- USED AMERICAN WEAPONS. COULD YOU RECALL WHAT KIND OF WEAPONS THE ARAB TERRORISTS USED IN EXECUTING OUR TWO DIPLOMATS IN KHARTOUM -- WHAT THEY USED?

A. I'D HAVE TO CHECK.

Q. IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE SO FAR THAT THESE ACCUSATIONS ARE BEING FOLLOWED UP BY ANY ACTIONS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS OR AMERICAN INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. NO ACTIONS OF WHICH I'M AWARE. OBVIOUSLY, IT IS OUR HOPE THAT BY CONTINUING TO DENY THE TRUTH OF THESE ALLEGATIONS WE CAN THEREBY AVOID ANY ACTIONS OF THAT KIND.

WE WERE CONCERNED TO NOTE THIS MORNING A PROMISE BY MR. ARAFAT -- WHETHER HE'S SPEAKING FOR THE PLO OR THE BSO IS NOT CLEAR IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES -- A PROMISE BY MR. ARAFAT THAT SOME MAJOR COUNTERACTION WAS PRESUMABLY AGAINST AMERICAN INTERESTS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, WAS IN CONTEMPLATION BY THE GUERRILLAS.

Q. DID YOU NOTICE THIS MORNING THAT RADIO MOSCOW CARRIED UNCLASSIFIED

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A REPORT IN WHICH IT REPEATED ALLEGATIONS; AND IS THERE ANY PLAN TO CALL AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THIS?

A. LET ME HOLD OFF A BIT WITH RESPECT TO ANY FORMAL FOLLOW-THROUGH. AND ONE HAS TO SAY THAT THAT BROADCAST WAS UNWELCOME IN THIS CAPITAL, FOR ALL OF THE REASONS WE'VE BEEN THROUGH IN THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS.

Q. YOU SAID EARLIER THAT IT'S THE AMERICAN POSITION THAT "THE VOICE OF MODERATION STILL HAS THE UPPER HAND AMONG THE PALESTINIANS." HOW IS THAT?

A. TWO THINGS COULD BE SAID: THE FIRST IS THAT IN THE BLACK SEPTEMBER ORGANIZATION, OR EVEN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LESS RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS AMONG THE FEDAYEEN. WE ARE

DEALING WITH A SMALL NUMBER OF ANARCHISTS, EXTREMISTS, TERRORISTS -- WHATEVER YOU MAY WISH TO CALL THEM.

THE OTHER IS SIMPLY A JUDGMENT CALL ON OUR PART WHICH I THINK IS WIDELY SHARED IN AND OUT OF THE AREA, AND THAT IS THAT THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR IS BROADLY REPUGNANT TO THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES IN THE AREA, AND RECOGNIZED AS UNLIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE POLITICAL END THEY SEEK, AND THE LEGITIMACY OF WHICH WE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED HERE.

Q. IS THIS THE FIRST TIME A U. S. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN HAS SAID THAT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO OR THE BLACK SEPTEMBER IS INTERCONNECTED? AND IF SO, DO WE HAVE EVIDENCE OF THAT?

A. I AM JUST TRYING TO RECALL IN RESPONSE TO YOUR FIRST QUESTION AND I CAN'T SAFELY. I KNOW THAT IT HAS BEEN WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED IN THIS CAPITAL AND OTHERS IN RECENT MONTHS.

NOW IN RESPONSE TO YOUR SECOND QUESTION, I HAVE TO SAY THAT WE ARE SATISFIED OF THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE BLACK SEPTEMBER ORGANIZATION AND AT LEAST SOME OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO.

LET ME JUST ADD ON BACKGROUND YOU HAVE TO DRAW YOUR OWN UNCLASSIFIED

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CONCLUSIONS FROM MR. ARAFAT'S WILLINGNESS YESTERDAY, TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF SO EXPLICITLY WITH THE BSO LEADERSHIP AND TO SUPPORT ITS CALLS TO VIOLENCE IN THE AREA.

I'M NOT CERTAIN HE UNDERSTOOD FULLY, WHAT HE IS DOING.

Q. THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, YOU MENTIONED THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING ADVISING TRAVELERS TO STAY OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST. ARE YOU STILL, OR ARE YOU NOW --

A. NO, I THINK WE ARE STILL CONSIDERING.

I DOUBT THAT THERE ARE MANY AMERICANS IN THIS COUNTRY OR ABROAD WHO ARE NOT AWARE OF THE STORY AND THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS, AND ARE MAKING THEIR PLANS ACCORDINGLY.

IN SHORT, THIS MAY BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE FORUM FROM WHICH TO ADDRESS THAT.

Q. SOME OFFICIALS IN THIS BUILDING IN THE PAST HAVE SUGGESTED THAT OVERT PLO GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES ARE INTENDED TO FRUSTRATE SOME MOVEMENTS TOWARD PEACE BETWEEN THE

ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS.

WAS THERE ANY NEW EFFORT BY THE UNITED STATES UNDER WAY
TOWARDS THIS LARGER GOAL OF BRINGING THE ARABS AND
ISRAELIS TOGETHER, WHICH HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED BY THE NICOSIA
INCIDENT AND --

A. HARD TO JUDGE, I THINK.

IT HAS BEEN OUR VIEW THROUGH RECENT MONTHS, WHICH WE HAVE
EXPRESSED PRIVATELY AS WELL AS PUBLICLY, THAT THE
NECESSARY NEXT STEP IN THAT REGARD WAS THE DECISION BY THE
GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO ENTER INTO SOMETHING WHICH
MIGHT AT A MINIMUM, BE DESCRIBED AS AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS
AND IDEAS -- AND MORE POSITIVELY, MIGHT TAKE THE FORM OF
SOMETHING MORE AKIN TO A NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

NOW, STOPPING AT THAT POINT AND GOING TO THE NEXT STEP:
THE HISTORY OF THE AREA SUGGESTS THAT IT IS EXTREMELY
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DIFFICULT TO --

TO TURN IT AROUND, THAT THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE, WHEN IT
HAD BEEN IN EVIDENCE, HAS NOT HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE
LARGER POLITICAL PROCESS.

BUT I'M NOT CERTAIN, GIVEN WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID, THAT I'M
THE MOST COMPETENT JUDGE, OR THAT WE ARE THE MOST COM-
PETENT JUDGES.

Q. WELL IS THE UNITED STATES INTERPRETING THE CURRENT
ACCUSATIONS AGAINST IT AS AN ATTEMPT TO FORESTALL FURTHER
NEGOTIATIONS?

A. WELL I DON'T KNOW THAT WE OUGHT TO BE IN POSITION OF
DRAWING AN INTERPRETATION ON THAT SUBJECT.

IMPLICITLY AND PERHAPS ALSO FROM THE STATEMENTS AND
ACTIONS OF THE BLACK SEPTEMBER ORGANIZATION, ONE MUST COME
TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL PURPOSES IS
TO FRUSTRATE A CONSTRUCTIVE POLITICAL PROCESS.

WHETHER THAT INVOLVED IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE LEGITIMATE
RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS AS A GROUP OR THE DIALOG WHICH
MIGHT ENCOMPASS THOSE OBJECTIVES AS BETWEEN THE PARTIES IN
THE AREA, OR THE PARTIES IN THE AREA AND THE UNITED
STATES. END QUOTE. ROGERS

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